Labour Monthly

A Magazine of International Labour

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

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NOTES OF THE MONTH *by R.P.D.*

OCTOBER T.U.C. *by George Allison*

THE RIFT IN THE BLOC *by Ivor Montagu*

"NOT GUILTY" *by Sheikh Abdulla*

AMERICA'S "LARGE POLICY" *by Arthur Clegg*

October, 1946

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LABOUR MONTHLY GUARANTEE FUND

Amount received in September, 1946 : £68 : 17 : 3

"A CONTRIBUTION TO THE TWENTY-FIVE 'GLORIOUS YEARS' FUND"

In the September List of Donations you may have noticed a splendid contribution of £5 from "Servicemen in India." Space did not permit us printing the letter which accompanied this, but we feel that these comrades in the services understand the role and the needs of the L.M. so well that we can do no better than make this letter our appeal for this month.

"Enclosed please find a cheque for five pounds as a contribution to the twenty-five 'Glorious Years' Fund.

"This amount is the collective effort of a number of comrades at present serving in India in the armed forces. We send it with greetings and thanks for the generally excellent level which L.M. has managed to maintain throughout the war years. When R.P.D. came to Calcutta we managed to see him for a brief period in the midst of his many engagements. It may interest you to know that his Indian Travel Notes are the most talked about contributions to the magazine at the present time.

"As you probably understand, we are all eagerly awaiting the day when we can return to England and our homes so much the wiser for our experiences in this country. At the same time, it is very easy to spend all one's time trying to sort out the complicated political situation here. This is where L.M. plays such an important part, in keeping us in touch with the international labour movement; this, of course, equally applies to our Indian comrades, who value L.M. every bit as much as we do, but are unfortunately more often disappointed, due to the enforced lack of supplies of the magazine."

A MINIMUM OF £100 PER MONTH NEEDED.

(Continued on page iii of cover)

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Three months have passed since the Bournemouth Labour Party Conference. So much has happened since then that that Conference might appear to belong to a vanished age. There are signs of new currents in the international situation which may profoundly affect present alignments. The very gravity of the situation is arousing a new awareness. At home there is a new stirring abroad in the land. Old illusions are beginning to give place to a changed mood. The people are on the move. This new stirring is full of significance and hope for the future.

I. From Bournemouth to Brighton

Then and Now

Consider. The Bournemouth Conference was universally declared to have "wiped out" the Communists for good and all, and to have delivered them a "knock-out blow." Today the Cabinet, the B.B.C. and the press appear to be more busily occupied with the Communists than ever, and are devising new methods to wipe them out afresh. The Bournemouth Conference (after a debate in which less than half an hour was allowed the delegates to express their opinions) gave a blanket endorsement to the foreign policy of Mr. Bevin and repudiated the Soviet and left criticisms of the imperialist, anti-democratic and anti-Soviet and warmongering character of his policy as hallucinations. Today the deadlock which that policy has reached is visible to all; the general deterioration of the international situation is causing universal alarm; and it is no longer only Soviet statesmen, but a member of Truman's Cabinet, the former idol of every left and Labour Party supporter and successor to the mantle of Roosevelt, Henry Wallace, who has sounded the warning against Bevin's imperialist and anti-Soviet policy as leading to the danger of war. That warning signal of new currents arising in the United States has given an unpleasant shock to the Byrnes-Bevin alliance.

Storm Signals

The Bournemouth Conference held out a picture of Britain marching to economic prosperity in close union with the multi-millionaires' crazy gambling-hell of United States economy, while cold-shouldering the planned economies of the new European democracies (except to send them threatening notes against nationalising the trust properties of Western capital) and the socialist economy of the Soviet Union. Today the preliminary Wall Street crashes, already exceeding in scale anything known for the past sixteen years, have sent a cold shiver down the spines of all those who have placed their hopes in capitalism and the American alliance for their economic salvation.

Moving into Action

The Bournemouth Conference, after delivering its doughty blow against the militant section of the working-class, presented the usual parliamentarian utopia that the return of a Labour majority and Government already provided the smooth road to socialism, with no role left for the working-class save as obedient, trustful voters and backers. Today the new wave of trade union battles for the closed shop, the militancy of the entire trade union movement over Spain and Greece, the squatters' movement and housing agitation, the revolt of Labour councils against depriving the unemployed and poorest households of the benefit of family allowances and the unemployed marches and demonstrations for work in Wales, Scotland and the Merseyside, have revealed that the working-class is moving into action. The elec-

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toral landslide which swept out Toryism from office a year ago was not the last act of the drama. It was the first act—even only the prelude. The remainder will follow.

"Disillusionment"?

In some left reformist quarters, which a year ago were most vociferous in hailing the return of the Labour Government as the dawn of a new socialist era and triumphant peaceful revolution, there is now talk of "disillusionment" with the resultant record. The *New Statesman* (September 7) writes of "the atmosphere of frustration" and continues:—

> The impression is growing that we witnessed, not the beginning of a new socialist dispensation, but merely a change of Government. That is not what the people voted for a year ago.
>
> The unauthorised strikes and the squatters' movement are blind and instinctive reactions to this failure. They are the consequence of a suspicion that the Government is more afraid of rousing the animosity of vested capitalist interests than of disappointing the reasonable demands of the labour movement.

But the mass mood today is by no means one of mere "frustration" and disillusionment and the reactions are far from "blind."

No—Strengthened Fight

Mere passive disillusionment would be a reactionary development, playing into the hands of reaction and of an eventual Tory revival. There are no signs whatever at present of any Tory revival, however anxiously the Tory managers scan the horizon. The people have rejected Toryism with hatred and contempt and are dourly and stubbornly determined to go forward along the path they have chosen, however much they may be disappointed with the present Labour Party leadership. What is developing is a new and growing determination to fight actively for the aims for which they voted. And with this determination there inevitably develops a positive and deeper understanding and recognition among all serious sections in the labour movement, after all the banal Tory-applauded anti-Communist froth and rubbish of Bournemouth has subsided, of the practical role of the Communist Party and the *Daily Worker* as the spearhead of advance of the entire labour movement. The coming Brighton Trades Union Congress will further show this advance on Bournemouth.

II. Wallace and Wall Street

Writing on the Wall

Of cardinal importance for the whole present international situation was the sharp Wall Street collapse of security values in September after the high point of May, with a net drop of over £3,000 million. It would be premature as yet to judge whether this collapse is comparable to the similar preliminary collapse in the spring of 1929 which preceded the onset of the economic crisis in the autumn. What has startled all observers, who were in any case generally assuming a major slump within about two years, is that this sharp decline of security values and panic selling should have begun so early, barely a year after the close of the war, when the full crazy boom, with the lid lifted off prices, might have appeared to have only begun to be soaring to its height. What is revealed is the desperate lack of confidence of the American investing public in the future, despite all the ballyhoo of prosperity. In the midst of unexampled technical advance, peak production and every material condition for abundance, the American people were never so anxious, uncertain, insecure and full of fear for the future, because they know from grim experience the rottenness of the economic system under which they live.

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Colossus with Clay Feet

The clay feet of the colossus are indeed revealed. Already during the war the disparity between the income of the working-class and of the capitalist class, which by the eve of the war had reached in the United States a gulf without parallel in the world, was further increased. Between 1939 and 1945 average real annual earnings increased by 18 per cent., while output per worker increased by 32 per cent., so that the workers' relative share of the product decreased by 11 per cent. The enormous increase of productive power has intensified this contradiction. Where is this vast surplus production to go, since even the first year has begun to reveal the limits of the pent-up purchasing power during the war, especially as the dizzy rise in prices after the removal of controls has accelerated the tempo of reaching these limits? It is obvious that the sharpening of this contradiction will lead to an intensified export drive, compared to which the present drive is only a trickle; and that a further intensification of the present drive to an aggressive expansionist foreign policy, arms building and eventually war—the only final market which modern American capitalism has been able to find adequate for its full production.

New American Imperialism

Hence the ruthless aggressive character of the whole present policy of American imperialism; the battering at every door to open markets and extend domination; the fury against every form of planned economy, State trading or socialism; insolent open intervention in the internal affairs of every country in the world; and the frenzied military preparation with expenditure of nearly half the budget, piling up of atom bombs and grabbing of offensive strategic bases in every continent and sea. Hence the widespread chauvinist propaganda for a "preventive war" to establish American world domination or the so-called "World State." Hence also the formidable internal economic strains, the gigantic strikes and mass unrest, and the universal war-panic of the American people. The colossus is heading for a crash. But its crash may set the world on fire.

Wallace's Warning

It is in this context that Henry Wallace's speech on September 12 to a New York audience of 19,000 takes on its significance. Immediately following the Wall Street slump, which was already beginning to prick the myth of American invincible power in the eyes of the world and discredit the American world-domination maniacs, Wallace was the first voice from top administration circles to express an alternative policy and reflect the American popular opposition to the Byrnes-Bevin imperialist anti-Soviet war policy. From this arose the special fury of Vandenberg, the Republican watchdog in charge of the American delegation in Paris, because the Wallace speech, especially with its preliminary Truman endorsement, revealed the disunity of American policy and threatened to "undo seven weeks' work" of peace-wrecking in Paris. Wallace did not only attack "British imperialist policy" which "would lead the United States straight to war." He also attacked the war plans of American imperialism, when he declared that "to military men the British Isles are our advanced air base against Europe" and referred to "the strategically located air bases with which the United States and Britain have encircled the world." His subsequently published letter has further made clear his attack on the reactionary aggressive anti-Soviet policy of American, as well as British imperialism.

Whither America?

Of course President Truman had to withdraw his textual endorsement of the speech, after his preliminary en-

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dorsement had done its job of sending a little cold note of warning to Britain of possible alternative policies of American-Soviet co-operation in relation to Anglo-American difficulties in the Middle East. To have stood by the endorsement would have meant a complete reversal of policy and return to the Roosevelt policies, with the terrific Big Business Republican and Right Wing Democrat onslaught which this would arouse. But the issue has been raised and is not dead. There are opposing currents in American policy. Sumner Welles' sharp criticism of Byrnes has further emphasised this division. It will be recalled how after the San Francisco Conference, where American representation under Stettinius had been soft wax in the hands of Eden and the British anti-Soviet line, a sharp correction followed, and American initiative led to the calling of the Moscow Conference. Such shifts are not excluded in the still fluid condition of international relations after the war. It is still not excluded that British reactionary policy and practical repudiation of the British-Soviet Alliance may find itself left high and dry, if United States policy, after exploiting it to the full in order to divide Britain and the Soviet Union, should choose to explore the possibility of an American-Soviet understanding as a more stable basis for world relations.

Progressive America

The characteristic attempt in the British official press to dismiss Wallace's speech as "mere electioneering" is a boomerang. For if it were "mere electioneering," then it would mean that the hard-boiled party managers judge it a popular vote-catching line in present-day America to oppose the reactionary anti-Soviet warmongering policy of the Anglo-American alliance, typically represented by Governor Dewey and advocate an understanding and co-operation with the Soviet Union. This throws an important light on real American popular opinion, which receives no reflection whatever in the one-sided highly selective press reports published here. "Public opinion" in the United States, as reported in the B.B.C. and British press, is based almost entirely on extracts from a handful of the most reactionary Big Business and Wall Street press, while the most progressive opinion, which Roosevelt knew how to mobilise and which found an important measure of expression in the C.I.O. and P.A.C., is unrepresented. Yet the last presidential election showed how 80 per cent. of the "free" (monopoly-owned) American press could be ranged on one side, while the majority of the people voted on the other side. The people rejected Dewey at the polls, but Dewey's policy is carried out by Byrnes; just as the people rejected Churchill at the polls, but Churchill's policy is carried out by Bevin. Since the death of Roosevelt, with Truman's surrender to the Republicans, this progressive camp and potential progressive majority has been confused and divided. But the strength of this progressive, democratic and anti-war popular opinion in the United States cannot be concealed by press distortion; and we hold out our hands to Progressive America in the common fight against reactionary policy in both our countries and for a sane international policy of peace through the co-operation of Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union.

III. Britain, America and Europe

"In the Glistening Wake"

The reactionary alliance of the most grasping monopolist forces of British and American imperialism, of Wall Street and the City, of Republican Big Business and Right Wing Democrats, under cover of an unworthy successor of Roosevelt, and of Tories and

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Munichites, under cover of Right Wing anti-communist Labour, to dominate the world for vested interests, is contrary to the vital needs of the British and American peoples and a menace to peace. It is comprehensible that a Roxas, the puppet collaborator of Japan and the Axis, now installed as President of the "independent" Philippines under the aegis of American military occupation, should sing the glories of American world conquest as the only future for every country:—

> The British Dominions owe a large measure of their security to their geographical position within the American defence sphere. Our safest course—and I firmly believe it is true for the rest of the world as well—is in the glistening wake of America.

But why should a Labour Foreign Minister sing the same tune?

An Unstable Alliance

But it is not only a reactionary alliance. It is an unstable alliance. It is a partnership of basically conflicting imperialisms, united only in rabid hatred of the new democracies and the Soviet Union. The "spiritual unity" which is toasted at West End luxury banquets is the unity of the Ritz and the Waldorf-Astoria, of Morgan and Rothschild, of Ascot and Hollywood. As soon as the descent is made from these exalted airs to the regions of colonial exploitation, to the mundane questions of markets and raw materials, to the rivalries of monopoly interests in Europe, in South America and Asia, the conflict is revealed.

The Lion and the Eagle

The ageing lion and the aspiring eagle may enter into an amicable joint adventure to conquer the world and uphold the divine superiority of lion-eagledom against the lesser breeds. But their outlooks diverge. The lion has already more booty in his cave than he can manage; his limbs grow stiff and he is racked with ageing pains; he is assailed on every side by revolts of his victims beyond his strength to master; he needs to economise his dwindling forces and looks hopefully to the strong talons of the eagle to maintain his liondom. But the eagle looks to the whole forest for his booty, not excluding the booty already in the lion's cave; he knows that the richest booty is in the lion's cave; he batters against the monopoly barriers which the lion seeks to maintain at the entrance to his cave and demands, their removal as the price of alliance; and he sees the lion's dwindling strength as a mere useful first line of defence to perish in the battle while he advances to the final lordship of the forest.

Military-Diplomatic Alliance and Economic Conflict

Montgomery and Eisenhower may meet in the United States and the Joint General Staffs prepare the plans to integrate the British and American armed forces. Byrnes and Bevin may be as inseparable as Laurel and Hardy to maintain their joint front in Paris, with the aid of their various stooges, to hold in check the new democracies and the Soviet Union, to overturn the decisions of Potsdam and Crimea, to protect reaction and neo-fascism and to rebuild the arsenal of monopoly in Western Germany as the "bulwark" against socialism in Eastern Europe. But at the same time the long battle over the conditions of the loan, the offensive to break down empire trade barriers and the sterling bloc, the rivalries in South America (most recently shown in relation to the Argentine), in Europe (also and not least in relation to Western Germany, with Britain backing the Social Democratic puppets and America its Catholic puppets) in the Mediterranean and the Near East, with the ostentatious rival dispatch of navies ("the cruise will be an effective answer to America's

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'Show the Flag' cruise which has been concurrently scheduled'' *Sunday Express*, September 1), and in the Middle East over oil, all reveal the real conflict.

Europe Undefeated

Further, the European peoples, after throwing off Nazism, are by no means disposed to accept the domination of Anglo-Saxondom. No longer the Soviet Union in isolation, as in 1918-39, but the new democracies in Europe and the Soviet Union in close co-operation are conducting a magnificent tireless day-by-day battle in Paris for the rights of freedom of all peoples and for the maintenance of peace. Jugoslavia stood up undismayed to the bullying ultimatum of the United States; and the resultant revelations of the incessant American marauding expeditions of bombers and reconnaissance planes over Jugoslavia, as well as of the embarrassing presence of the Turkish observer and his documents on the American plane, led to a quick retreat and endeavour to hush up the incident on the part of the American militarists.

Sweden's Example

While Britain still holds off a long-term credit agreement with the Soviet Union (though the limited initial trade agreement just reached can, at any rate, be a belated first step) Sweden has reached its five-year trade agreement with the Soviet Union, covering not merely a direct exchange of goods of some £35 million, but a credit of some £70 million. The usual insolent hectoring ultimatum arrived from the United States in the shape of a Note to Sweden to break the agreement. Sweden's dignified refusal to tolerate such interference with its independence rebuffed the American would-be world dictators. The pill was the more bitter for the dollar dictators to swallow, since the hard-headed realists in charge of Swedish policy did not conceal their judgment (as reported in the New York *Herald-Tribune*) that they had ''little confidence in America's ability to solve the post-war economic mess,'' and considered that ''by tying in with Russia, Sweden will cushion a future crash,'' since Soviet economy is ''less subject to world depression.'' Has this no lesson for those in charge of Britain's economic policy? The Soviet Union now has trade agreements with France, with Sweden, with Denmark, with Hungary, with Czechoslovakia, with Bulgaria, with a host of European countries. A wall of defence is being built up against the threatened maelstrom from the American madhouse. Only Britain remains tied to the gamblers' ''free enterprise'' economy of the United States.

IV. End of Imperialism?

''Imperialism''

Nothing has angered British official expression more than Wallace's indictment of ''British imperialist policy.'' Tory and official Labour editorials unite in remarkably similar language to rebuff this incredible charge. They find it ''absurd,'' ''obsolete,'' ''out of date.'' Have we not freed India? Are we not freeing Egypt? And all the colonial countries as fast as they are fit for freedom? This virtuous indignation is overdone. It is time for public opinion in this country to get a little more used to ''seeing ourselves as others see us.'' The traveller abroad finds one question facing him from progressives in every country wherever he goes: ''How long will the British workers tolerate Bevin's policy of armed maintenance of imperialism and reaction all over the world?'' When Soviet spokesmen make the criticism, it is dismissed as partisan Communist malevolence against social democracy. When a leading member of Truman's

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Cabinet makes the same observation, it is dismissed as absurd American demagogy. No doubt, if the whole world were to make the same criticism, our sapient editorial writers would conclude that the whole world has gone cock-eyed. But the world pays little attention to the endless self-glorification of British editorial writers and statesmen. The world is more interested in crude facts. The world observes the operations of British armed forces all over the world (by no means only, or even mainly in ex-enemy countries), in Greece and Cyprus and Palestine and Transjordan and Irak and India and Burma and Malaya and Indonesia and crudely concludes that this military occupation and domination of one-fifth of the human race is an expression of imperialism.

Quitting India?

How long will the British military occupation of India continue? There is no official answer to that question. No date has been set for withdrawal. Mr. Bevin used to thump the table during those famous debates at the UNO Council on Iran and declare that it was "one of the cardinal points of my policy" that while foreign military troops are in occupation of a country there can be no free negotiations with the representatives of that country. Mr. Bevin had better apply his "cardinal principle" to India, and there will be little left of the pretence of granting India freedom.

A Cabinet on a Chain

No doubt Nehru has been appointed Vice-President of the Viceroy's Council (not Premier, as the press here has wrongly reported), and the Congress leaders have been appointed colleagues of the Viceroy—only after the Congress has pledged itself to accept and fulfil the British Plan with all its stultifying undemocratic restrictions "in its entirety." But the Viceroy remains absolute constitutional master. No informal "gentlemen's understandings" about not using the Viceroy's veto in practice can change the realities of this position. What need of the veto so long as the imposed policy is obediently carried out and the civilian Councillors accept responsibility for the British military occupation or police and military firing on the people? But if there is any trouble, the Viceroy can dismiss that "*Cabinet*" in five minutes and appoint any he chooses. The final power rests with the British Commander in Chief, who is responsible, not to any Indian Government, but to the British Government in London. Supposing Hitler had conquered Britain; and supposing he were to ordain that, under his German Nazi Gauleiter, Mr. Attlee would be graciously permitted to be Vice-President of the Gauleiter's Council, while Nazi troops remained in occupation of Britain, would the British people really throw up their caps to celebrate such unheard-of-unprecedented earth-shaking generosity of a conqueror in granting freedom to the British people?

"Strategic Reserve" for India

No date may have been fixed for British military withdrawal from India. But some facts certainly do not look like withdrawal. In June this year (that is, *after* the promulgation of the British Plan) the British Air Ministry sent a confidential instruction to Air Headquarters in India, recently published in the Indian press, to prepare for the accommodation in India of a "strategic reserve" from the United Kingdom, covering eleven squadrons (including four long-range bomber squadrons) by the end of 1946 and eighteen squadrons by 1950—

> A plan should be prepared for the accommodation by July, 1950, of the Plan "C" Strategic Reserve, namely:—
> 6 Long Range Bomber Squadrons
> 3 Light Bomber Squadrons
> 3 Long Range Fighter Squadrons
> 5 Ground Attack Fighter Squadrons
> 1 Single-Engined Squadron
> Total: 18 Squadrons.

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Two questions arise on this document. First, how does it come about that, in spite of the supposed grant of "independence" to India, the British military authorities appear to be so confident that air operations in India will continue to be under the control of the British General Staff in 1950? The second question is still more intriguing. Why is the British Labour Government so interested in establishing a base for six long-range bomber squadrons to operate from India in 1950?

"Jolly Old Empire"

"We are great friends of the jolly old Empire and we mean to stick to it." When Mr. Morrison made this declaration in New York two months ago, it was characteristic of the antediluvian delusions of American opinion, obsessed with memories of King George III, to regard this as an expression of imperialism, brand 1946. When Mr. Morrison, in the House of Commons in June of this year, boasted of the annexation of Sarawak as "a little bit being added to the British Empire" and called for Tory applause on this account, it is obvious that only a quixotic pedant would regard this as bearing any suggestion of an imperialist outlook. When Mr. Bevin, in his famous outburst, complained that any Soviet concern in the affairs of the Mediterranean was equivalent to "cutting across the throat of the British Empire," it is evident that the picturesqueness of his language was only intended to convey more vividly the intensity of his anti-imperialist sentiments.

"Batoned to Work"

General Smuts, that unquenchable voice of freedom of the exploited colonial masses, indignantly repudiated the suggestion that the British Empire is in any sense imperialist. That, he explained, came to an end long ago, ever since the Boer War—in fact, ever since the Boer exploiters were taken in with the British exploiters to hold down the African masses in slavery. General Smuts, before he makes his next philosophic peroration on the freedom ideals of the British Empire and its striking contrast to the vulgar equality of nations in the Soviet Union, had better look to his own South Africa: where the most infamous racial laws are being continuously intensified both against Indians and against Africans; where fifty Communist leaders have been placed on trial for the crime of supporting African miners on strike; and where the African miners were, according to a correspondent's description:—

> literally batoned back to work. If they refused to go underground, they were batoned and batoned till they went, chased over the veldt in lorries and cars, until they were exhausted, and beaten back to work. And if they went underground and refused to work, police went underground and batoned them up, stope by stope, level by level, until they reached the top—then batoned them back underground again.

"Jolly old Empire."

Cyprus

But we are not responsible for what happens in South Africa? Then let us take Cyprus, where constitutional figments have long been destroyed, and open autocracy of the Colonial Office is maintained against the opposition of the entire people. In January of this year (that is, under the Labour Government) the entire leadership of the Cypriot Trade Union Congress, a partner with the British Trade Union Congress in membership of the World Federation of Trade Unions, was sentenced to imprisonment for terms of twelve to eighteen months for the crime of maintaining an "unlawful association," i.e., the Pan-Cypriot Trade Union Committee. The possession of socialist literature was declared a crime. The following exchange took place between the President of

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the Court and the Solicitor-General of Cyprus:—

President: Is Marxist theory a crime?
Solicitor-General: According to Cyprus law, yes.
President: Is the possession of Marxist books a crime?
Solicitor-General: Yes.

Social Democracy versus Socialism

Still more remarkable is the answer of the Colonial Office Parliamentary Secretary, Mr. Creech-Jones, when an anti-imperialist Labour M.P. raised the question in March. So far from repudiating the sentences and rulings, Mr. Creech-Jones replied that the law in England is really the same:—

Mr. Solley raised the question of the imprisonment of the eighteen leaders of the Cypriot trade union movement. They were, he said, imprisoned at the end of a thirty-four days' trial after being found guilty of being members of an unlawful association. . . . It was fantastic that while there was a Labour Government at Westminster socialism was a crime according to Cyprus.

Mr. Creech-Jones said that the charges against the trade union leaders concerned were made under the Criminal Code in Cyprus, which was precisely similar to the law in this country. The law of this country was the basis of the law in Cyprus. He regretted the rather intemperate language which Mr. Solley had used. The prosecutions were not matters for the Colonial Office whatsoever. They were matters within the jurisdiction of the administration of the local authorities. (*Times*, June 3, 1946.)

If the day should come when the colonial peoples place Social Democracy on trial for its crimes against the peoples of the world, let them not plead, like the Nuremburg hypocrites, that they "did not know" what was being done in their name. They knew; the questions were raised by sincere anti-imperialist members of their own party; and they defended the official outrages.

V. Man-Power and Reconstruction

Price of Empire

What is the price of this policy of imperialism, of armed intervention and domination and backing of reaction and monopoly interests in so many countries all over the world, of Anglo-American sabre-rattling and atom-bomb bluster and anti-Soviet threats, for the British people at home? That price must be squarely faced; for it is at the root of all our problems and not least, of our home problems. The first part of the price, which is felt in every household, is the crippling of the prospects of British reconstruction. The second part of the price is the hostility of peoples abroad, when we need friendship and co-operation. The final price is war. If the policy of the Anglo-American line-up against the Soviet Union is maintained it is Britain that is the most vulnerable and has to pay the most, both now and hereafter.

Hard Facts

Face the facts. A full year after the conclusion of the war, over two millions are still in the armed forces, according to the last return (June, 1946). The present plan provides for 1,200,000 by the beginning of next year, as against under half a million in 1939. There is no plan yet for further reduction. There is no plan yet announced for the final allocation of man-power and for shaping policy according to real strength. How long can this bleeding of British man-power and economic resources, desperately needed at home, continue for crazy policies abroad? France after the first world war endeavoured to pursue a grandiloquent foreign policy out of all relation to its real strength,

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and cracked under the strain. Must Britain tread the same road?

Dilemma of Bevinism

It is here that we come to the fatal contradiction of Bevinism, which will spell its inevitable bankruptcy. Conscription will make available for the forces an annual intake of 190,000. Two years' compulsory service, with all the burden that that implies, would provide 380,000, alongside whatever numbers are provided by voluntary long-term service. What relation does this bear to the present scale of foreign and imperialist policy envisaged by Bevinism? Already the service chiefs are sounding the alarm. Lord Tedder declared on September 10 that air recruiting was 50 per cent. below requirements: "The position is dangerous. We are in danger of losing the race."

Voting with their Feet

The *Sunday Times* military correspondent wrote on August 18:—

> Britain's foreign policy and the hitherto satisfactory demobilisation programme are seriously handicapped by the poor response to the army recruiting campaign, which has so far produced only one quarter of the men wanted. . . .
>
> The army is already having to retain men a little longer than the other two services because of its vast policing commitments.

It will be observed that in the eyes of this Tory journal it is "Britain's foreign policy" and "vast policing commitments" that are "handicapped" by lack of sufficient armed forces, not the foreign policy and vast policing commitments that are misusing man-power and handicapping reconstruction at home. The lack of response to the present recruiting campaigns, despite all the publicity and lavish promises of better conditions, suggests that the people are voting with their feet: they want to build homes in Britain, not bomb homes in Indonesia. There are still some in Labour's ranks who boast of concentrating on practical home problems, and leaving foreign policy to the experts or to the empty talkers with their eyes on the ends of the earth instead of in Britain. Blind innocence. They forget that the key problem of home reconstruction is man-power and that the chairman of the Man-Power Board, determining the allocation of man-power, is—Mr. Bevin.

Britain's Economic Problem

The British economic position is indeed serious. The tasks of home reconstruction will require all the strength of the nation. The upward spurt of quick sales of exports in a seller's market is no indication that the basic problems of reorganising home economy, whether in industry or agriculture, have yet been tackled, or even that any comprehensive plan is yet revealed for their tackling. The very limited and very formal nationalisation in a small sphere of economy is at best a preliminary to a real programme of development and modernisation. There is nothing yet comparable to the energy with which the new democratic countries in Eastern Europe have put through large-scale nationalisation of the main field of industry, breaking up of landlordism and state-aided reconstruction of industry and agriculture. Nothing has yet been done that cuts into the interests of the monopolists or diminishes their profits.

Price of Monopoly

Britain remains monopoly capitalist Britain, and the laws of capitalism continue to operate with their full force. The big concerns are making higher profits than ever, despite the low level of production. One thousand and sixty-three firms listed in the *Economist* made £270 million profits in the first year of the Labour Government, as against £257 million in the preceding year. The

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earnings of the workers are falling. In the six months up to January, 1946, the average earnings of all workers were recorded as having fallen by 7s. 3d. a week ; and there are signs that this drop has continued. Prices continue to rise; and new increases are threatened. The number of unemployed is rising, especially in the old depressed areas, and is already over one-third of a million; and if we include the concealed figure of unemployment returned under the heading "ex-members of H.M. Forces who have not yet taken up employment," would number over a million. There is no room for glorification here.

A Class Fight

It is, therefore, a welcome sign that the class spirit of the workers is rising to press forward the fight for changes and for a more radical policy. The demonstrations for work in the depressed areas are no longer the old unemployed marches, but have the backing of the whole trade union movement. The squatters' movement brought into the forefront of public attention the issue of life before property; whether priority should be given to providing twenty guinea a week flats for the wealthy or homes for homeless families. Although the entire strength of the law, the police, the Government and the press was exerted on the side of the sacred prior rights of luxury and the twenty guinea a week flats for the rich, the strength of the demonstration has compelled a speeding up of requisitioning and given a new urgency to the housing programme as against black market repairs for the rich. The closed shop movement and strikes and the agenda of the Brighton Trades Union Congress indicate the spirit that is moving among the workers. The people are realising that it was not enough to vote Labour in June, 1945, and wait for the results to fall in their laps. The fight goes forward—for peace, for production, for social and economic reorganisation, for real class changes. And it is for this fight that the campaign of the Communist Party and of all the progressive elements of the labour movement is mobilising the people to ensure that, despite the brakes of reaction, they shall win the aims for which they voted.

R. P. D.

September 19, 1946.

The Editor of LABOUR MONTHLY will be very glad to receive contributions in the form of finished articles or of suggestions and data for articles. The customary proviso must be made that no responsibility is undertaken for manuscripts sent to him nor can he promise to enter into any correspondence regarding contributions not accepted.

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The October T.U.C.

by GEORGE ALLISON

THE 1945 Trade Union Congress gave the new Labour Government a great send off.

When Mr. Attlee delivered his fraternal address as the first Labour Prime Minister, backed by a clear majority in the House of Commons, Congress gave him an enthusiastic reception and when he declared:—

> We shall carry out the policy which we have placed before the country with resolution and vigour and we shall, I believe, get full support and co-operation from organised labour.

no one could doubt that Congress responded to a man. The President of Congress, referring to the Prime Minister's speech, said:—

> In our industrial movement we generally work on this principle: that if we have anything to say to the Labour Government we say it, and we are giving no promises in advance that we will not criticise the Labour Government. . . . Therefore I say to the Prime Minister, on behalf of this movement: We wish you well in your work and if you lack anything, do not lack courage to carry it out.

So we can see that the support of Congress was not altogether unqualified.

When Congress assembles in Brighton on October 21 the delegates will be mindful of all that has happened in the past year and they will, throughout the course of the week, be inevitably faced up to the task of estimating how far the Labour Government has faced up to its obligations and satisfied the aims and aspiration of the millions represented in the T.U.C.

Broadly speaking, the vital issues present themselves in three categories, all closely interlinked; the wide range of questions relating to post-war reconstruction; the economic and social problems of the people; and foreign policy.

At once it can be said that there exists in the trade union movement a serious concern for the Government's post-war reconstruction plans and the speed with which they are being carried out.

A number of resolutions on the preliminary agenda of the Congress are evidence of the serious concern in the trade unions with regard to the policy of the Government on nationalisation. True, the Bank of England has been brought under public ownership, the mines have been nationalised and all that was promised under this heading in the King's Speech as a first slice of "Let's Face the Future" has been realised or is in hand. But no one can pretend that the nationalisation of the mines, for example, has so far produced a new atmosphere in the mining areas or throughout the industrial movement. The feeling prevails that compensation payments have been generous beyond the limit. The composition of the national and regional boards is heavily weighted with coal and big business interest and there is growing dissatisfaction on the question of trade union participation in control and management.

Then there is the retreat on the steel industry and serious misgivings with regard to Government policy on the future of this industry, so vital to post-war reconstruction and the whole of British economy. If to this we add the growing opposition of private enterprise in all the other industries scheduled for nationalisation, it becomes clear that this in itself is one of the major issues coming before the T.U.C.

Interlinked with nationalisation is the general question of reconstruction, and there are a number of other problems on which the Congress delegates will adopt a critical attitude and look

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for better assurances. Serious issues can be raised concerning the general direction of the Government's plans. Is the man-power in engineering being used to the best advantage, bearing in mind the need for re-equipment and technical development in the basic industries against the ending of the post-war boom. Are the working parties in, say, cotton, clothing and furniture working along lines that will really revolutionise those industries, bring them up to standards of efficiency comparable with other countries and provide a higher standard of living and security for the operatives?

It can, of course, be argued that the Government has acquired powers in regard to the general direction of industry and economic development. But the prime political issue on which Congress will seek satisfaction centres on how far it is possible to realise the Britain of "Let us Face the Future" unless much more serious inroads are made on the liberties of private enterprise and the strongholds of rent, interest and profit.

When we have *The Times* editorial (September 4, 1946) stating that "Wage increases that have taken place so far have not gone beyond what was to be expected" it can be generally agreed in the working-class movement that wages are lagging rather badly behind. The general picture is agreed on all sides. There has been an overall drop of earnings in all but a few of the lower paid trades. Piece prices have been cut and overtime reduced. Where upward adjustments have been made the increases have been very promptly passed on to the consumer and in general the sanctity of profits maintained.

The demand arising out of the movement for a clear declaration of Government policy on wages has been widely distorted. But it is clear from the resolutions on the preliminary agenda that the affiliated unions don't accept the distorted views that a Government policy on wages means freezing on the one hand or usurping the powers of the trade unions on the other.

There will be general support for endeavours to be made by the General Council to get clarity on the question of a national minimum wage and along with this will come the vexed question of equal pay for equal work and the rate for the job, wage rates for the youth as well as the general question of price control. There can be no doubt that the general aim of the trade unions in the present period is to secure advances in real wages at the expense of profits to provide the greatest measure of security for the lower paid grades and to ensure that price controls are so operated as to increase the purchasing power of the consumers.

Next of importance on immediate issues is the problem of a shorter working week. On this issue Congress already has a clearly defined policy, and the vital question is to secure the speediest possible application. Already several industries have broken through towards a forty-hour week, as well as a whole number of individual firms. It is rapidly becoming an issue of first importance.

Congress will, no doubt, register its approval of all the small advances made, but we can anticipate that there will be considerable pressure on the general question.

At the Labour Party Conference at Bournemouth this very issue was sidestepped by being referred to a Joint Committee of the Labour Party and the T.U.C. But the movement is not likely to be satisfied to leave it at that.

The squatters movement has literally forced the question of housing into the forefront and there is no doubt that Congress will be obliged to make a critical examination of the Govern-

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ment's housing policy, the tardiness in house construction and repair, the inadequacy of the labour forces and the dissipation of building labour on black-market building.

Foreign policy is likely to be the most controversial question on the agenda. A resolution standing in the name of the Electrical Trade Union provides facilities for a first-class debate and a critical examination of every aspect of Government policy in foreign affairs. Within this framework there are two issues that may be singled out for separate treatment. On the question of Spain and the Franco Government the General Council of the Trade Union Congress is completely identified with the stand taken by the World Federation of Trade Unions, which calls for the breaking off of economic and diplomatic relations with the Franco Government. On the question of Greece, the serious concern of the General Council is indicated in their request that the Foreign Secretary should receive a deputation. The resolution of the Electrical Trade Unions, however, goes far beyond those issues in that it views as extremely dangerous the general lines of foreign policy reflected in Anglo-American unity against the Soviet Union and the factual rejection of the Potsdam Agreement in relation to Germany. Coupled with this are resolutions on world economic co-operation, India and the colonies, which already indicate the extreme dissatisfaction prevailing in the trade union movement. The resolutions dealing with the colonies are of particular importance in so far as they cover not only the general question of colonial status, but also the standards of living and trade union and democratic rights. Here Congress will have the opportunity of adopting a line of policy beneficial both to the colonial workers in their drive for social and economic advance and also to the trade and economic well-being of Britain.

On the more internal questions Congress will be obliged to give consideration to the drive for 100 per cent. trade unionism and the "closed shop."

The problem here is not simply one of freezing out the break-away and company unions, but rather one which involves unqualified recognition of the status of the smaller bona fide trade union organisations and at the same time leaves in the hands of the trade unions and in the main their workshop representatives the onus for achieving and maintaining 100 per cent. trade union membership in industry. Undoubtedly the occasion will be used to make a re-examination of the existing structure and to encourage the efforts initiated three years ago to achieve greater co-ordination and unity throughout the movement.

The question of production and productivity in all its political implications will force its attention on the delegates in many different ways. It is true there are resolutions on the agenda dealing specifically with industrial productivity and calling for a survey of all the questions involved, but apart from these considerations, Congress will be faced with the stark fact that the material and human resources are not being used to the best advantage. It is to be admitted that the campaigns conducted by the Government and the Trade Union Congress have not produced the response anticipated and a searching examination of the causes will undoubtedly be necessary if a strenuous effort is to be made to mobilise the manpower and the nation's resources to the best advantage. In this regard, no doubt, special consideration will be given to the prevalence of unemployment in such places as South Wales, Scotland and North-East Coast, precisely those

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areas which were hardest hit in the depressions between the wars.

There are a number of other features which will stamp this year's Congress. There will be general approval for the consolidation of the World Federation of Trade Unions and every likelihood of agreement on the general programme and organisational measures adopted. It is significant also to note that the Civil Service unions debarred on the 1927 Trades Dispute Act will be back in Congress this year greater in numerical strength and able to play a vital part in the life of the Congress.

Throughout the war years, the T.U.C. grew in stature as well as numerical strength. It has won for the trade unions a voice in every aspect of Government policy and national life. More and more it is being looked upon as the parliament of labour. It is precisely this new status which focuses still more attention on this year's deliberations and the importance of its decisions. Throughout the world, millions of people will be keenly watching the debates on foreign affairs, anxious to ascertain if the policy pursued by the Labour Government really meets with the approval of organised labour. Four vital months have passed since Bournemouth, months in which the situation has very rapidly deteriorated.

The great strength of Congress during war years was based on the forthright hatred of fascism which permeated the entire membership.

We are therefore entitled to expect that Congress will take up a most vigorous attitude in order to ensure that fascism in its various forms is now completely destroyed and that Britain will stand out as a leader amongst democratic nations seeking to develop most friendly and fruitful political and economic relations with democracy everywhere. This is undoubtedly the big question that stands before Congress. A correct stand on this issue will strengthen the whole movement for every aspect of the struggle on the democratic front.

The Rift in the Bloc

by IVOR MONTAGU

THERE can be no doubt that there is in existence an Anglo-American bloc.

The two Governments have ganged up together. They are acting in concert according to a closely calculated plan on all world problems.

They publicly consult together: the Paris junketings with Mr. Bevin and Mr. Byrnes ostentatiously closeted day by day with one another and as ostentatiously cutting Mr. Molotov, are only the culmination of a long process, which began at Quebec, of British and U.S. public adjustment of a common policy from which to exclude, and with which to confront, the frozen-out third "partner."

They send notes together—at times which vary only by a few minutes, and with texts which vary only by a few commas.

They vote together upon every issue —against U.S.S.R., against every new European government that has dealt resolutely with its quislings and is marching toward Socialism and for Peron, for Franco, for Greek George.

They have clearly neatly parcelled out the world into spheres in some of which they shall act jointly, while in some the one shall initiate action and the other shall smother every criticising voice. For MacArthur to act in Japan —is for His Majesty's Government to acquiesce. The marines abet Chinese

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civil war—Britain's spokesmen are as silent as though the phenomenon were passing upon another planet. The Americans seize bases everywhere—from vulgar squatting of this type Mr. Attlee averts his eyes. India starves and groans—the U.S. State Department is not interested. In the Mediterranean area—the U.S. backs Britain; whatever Britain may happen to have done in Greece, the U.S. spokesmen answer the Security Council, "has our wholehearted support." Even their armed forces are becoming "integrated," to use Viscount Montgomery's expression, carrying out Mr. Churchill's prescription which Mr. Bevin refused to disavow.

All this is very touching, very loving and not accidental.

An exhibition of trust and amity—patched up with glue.

To some it appears as a spontaneous and happy freak of nature. A whole mythology has grown up about the basis of the tie. It happens that the two governments just naturally gravitate together on all questions. They think alike because they exemplify Western democracy, or Christian morals, or plain civilised behaviour, or "Anglo-Saxon blood," or just because they are the only delegates at conferences mutually comprehensible to one another without interpreters.

All this naif, jejune mythmaking omits the essential. It is Hamlet without the Prince. It ignores the bond in common which does unite this David and Jonathan of the modern world. The two parties *happen* to be the greatest, most industrially advanced, most powerful representatives of capitalism today extant.

Writing in 1915, Lenin wrote of the possibility of such partnerships: "Of course *temporary* agreements between capitalists and between the powers are possible . . . but what for? Only for the purpose of jointly suppressing socialism . . . of jointly protecting colonial booty. . . ." And he wrote before there was any Socialist sector, so uncomfortably and impertinently in being, and before the colonies were so insistent against remaining as booty.

Note Lenin's word "temporary" (his own underlining).

There are some people who look with complacency upon this development. (The sort of people who believe in Federal Union and used to find excuses for Hitler's New Europe.) It has meant, of course, the almost complete breakdown of the Anglo-Soviet twenty years Treaty. For, according to the wording of that treaty, Britain and U.S.S.R. were to consult and work out solutions of problems like preventing German aggression together: and, not only have such consultations long ago been given up, but clearly one party cannot enter into them when it follows the alternative method of always consulting first separately with someone else and only talking to the other party subsequently, in the presence of the someone else with whom his own attitude has already been decided.

But in the substituted Anglo-American bloc such simple folk see a possible alternative, at least something natural, firm and steady to hold on to and build out from in a changing world. The seed somehow of a future world harmony.

But the point is: so close an alliance between two such great capitalisms is not natural. It can only be achieved by an agreement that temporarily conceals the divergences—rifts that remain under the plaster and must break out as rifts anew. Even if interests can be reconciled temporarily:—

"Divisions cannot take place except in 'proportion to strength.' And strength changes in the course of economic development. . . . Under capitalism the even growth of individual enterprises or individual states, is impossible. Under capitalism there is nothing else that periodically restores the disturbed equilibrium but

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crises in industry and wars in politics.''—(Lenin: *The United States of Europe Slogan.*)

Between Socialist states there is no intrinsic disharmony of economic interest. Conflicts are relics of past history, which experience of the mutual benefit of collaboration are bound to cure (e.g., Teschen). But the interests of capitalist states are intrinsically rival. Where Socialist states can integrate their economies and trade on a basis of mutual advantage, capitalist economies with their perpetual secretion of surplus value, consumption of which in their home markets can only be achieved by abandoning capitalism, are driven to competition in one small world that each seeks to hog as the exclusive dumping ground for exported goods or investments.

An agreement simply means a carve-up. A temporary pact based on the sharing of the one world, with the share delimited by the concessions the weaker has to make.

The interests of Britain and the U.S.A. as capitalist states conflict at a thousand corners. Agreement has been achieved only at the price of great surrender. Is it in the interest of British capitalism to see the U.S. establish economic dominion over Japan and China? Yet that is what it is doing through Hirohito and the Kuomintang. Is it in the interest of British imperialism to see preserved, patched up and restored to the world's map the full flower of Japanese imperialism? Yet that is the task on which MacArthur is engaged. And Britain is bound to silence.

At the present time the rival interests of British and U.S. imperialism define themselves clearly: the power policy and the dollar policy. Britain, as the weaker productive unit, can rival the United States in trade only by legally exclusive measures to preserve itself a sector (e.g., bilateral pacts, colonial sovereignty, imperial preference). U.S.A., as overwhelmingly the stronger, seeks to whittle these away; every barrier removed, every new area gained for the principle of equality of export enterprise for all, means a new realm won, certainly and inevitably, for its own commercial domination.

With the American loan as a short-term prop, with the political backing expressed in the '' bloc '' set-up in post-war diplomacy, Faustus—Britain has purchased a brief fling from Uncle Sam—Mephistopheles. The renunciation of imperial trade barriers, the submission to Wall Street censorship and veto of all bilateral trade agreements (e.g., the Canadian), the so-called multilateral system which means the open door to American supremacy is the price that Faustus is called upon to pay.

But it is the law of social process that even such a bargain cannot be kept. Already the mere rapidly expanding American potential is bursting it at the seams. What was a common courting of Peron and Franco has already become a race; in the case of the former swain Britain is already getting very much the worse of the deal.

The appetite of U.S. imperialism and the anxiety to preserve their corner is already rocking the airways agreement, hardly more than a year old. After a certain amount of boggling and much misgiving, in which Bevin had to go down on his knees to the rest of the British cabinet imploring it not to disgrace him in the eyes of his friend Byrnes, the British government has been obliged, victim of its own dishonest anti-Soviet fictions about the alleged consequences of ''disunity'' in Germany, to surrender to the U.S.A. every asset it possessed in the four-cornered conflict over Germany. The famous ''integration'' of the British and American zones means nothing less. It has no more to do with ''unifying'' German economy or making the western zones solvent than my old

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boot. Its function is simply to place the vital key of the Ruhr in American hands to turn and to open up the British-occupied zone as well as the American-occupied zone to the "gold rush" of big American trusts, bent on reclaiming their pre-war interests and partnerships in Germany.

Unkindest cut of all, not even the Mediterranean is to be left as Britain's private *mare nostrum*. Hanging on to all the North African vantage points they received from Darlan as part of the reward for not hanging him at once as he deserved, the Yanks are now, with sardonic humour, watching the too-clever Cairo mentors of British policy piling up ordure and odium for the name of Britain from Palestine to the Piraeus, while, keeping their skirts clear of the discredit, dangling their gold in the background before Arab and Greek appetite alone, they seek to reap where the delayed demob of the British fighting man has sown. Walter Lippman writes openly: "The United States will have to enter the Middle East as one of the principal powers. . . . We cannot stay out of the Middle East. We cannot remain there as the mere auxiliary of Britain." And the battleship Franklin D. Roosevelt, lying in Athens roadstead, flaunting its secret weapons and its unsecret flights of planes, is a reminder to Tsaldaris and Greek George that there are bigger and better backers in the neighbourhood than the British bayonets to which they might think they owe so much.

Yes, the partnership of British and U.S. capitalism less resembles that of a pair of brothers marching arm-in-arm than the partnership between the boa-constrictor and the subject that he swallows, with his jaws distended by the process into an amiable grin. So capitalist associations must ever be.

There is, of course, however, another aspect to this particular example: Britain is not merely, by economy and structure of society, a great capitalist and imperialist state. It is a country headed by a Labour Government, with a Parliament elected to carry out a policy of planned economy.

It is impossible that there can be any correspondence between the policy of U.S. capitalism, determined to maintain and increase the world area available to unrestricted capitalist exploitation, to weaken, discredit and overthrow all Socialist and incipient Socialist economies that stand in the way, and the policy to which the Labour Government is pledged, of modifying capitalism and working toward its substitution by Socialism.

The Anglo-American bloc, which in the sphere of association of two capitalist states means the preservation of the Empire only at the price of gradually liquidating it as a *British* Empire, in the sphere of association of the Truman administration with the Labour Government means the rapid and wholesale renunciation of all the Socialist policies that generations of Labour supporters have striven to see realised.

Already Anglo-Soviet official friendship and even co-operation is a dead letter. Already Britain is, as a state, the venomous enemy of all the new progressive lands. Already the home programme is slowing down and being emptied of class content; its kernel of steel nationalisation abandoned, "lor-anorder" and the preservation of the property of the rich its declared objective.

And for what gain? The liberal perfectionists who were stampeded into denigrating Big Three co-operation as something less than world-wide friendship and equality, can now make themselves happy at its replacement by a Big Two association busy struggling for world domination by the Big One. Is peace at the end of this road somewhere? Watch the bared teeth and curling lips of all the reactionary

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hyenas and potential war profiteers to know the answer. This partnership is not only manifestly worsening the world situation day by day. It is a partnership which does not contain and of its own nature cannot contain any element of stability or trust.

"Not Guilty"

by SHEIKH ABDULLA

(On September 10 Sheikh Abdulla, leader of the Kashmir People's Conference, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for speeches (delivered in May of this year) demanding the end of the rule of the Maharajah and democratic freedom for Kashmir. Reference to the Kashmiri will be found in Travel Notes No. 5 in this issue. Below we give the main portions of Sheikh Abdulla's defence.—Ed., L.M.)

I HAVE pleaded not guilty to the charges of sedition, which, according to jurists, is a crime against society and I stand by whatever I have said or written in regard to the fundamental rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

I am not interested in a personal defence and I would not have undertaken it if I had not felt that my trial for "sedition" is something far more than a personal charge against me. It is, in effect, a trial of the entire population of Jammu and Kashmir: though even some of them, being content with their transient, personal interests, or out of fear, may not be prepared to recognise or openly declare this.

Oppressed by the extreme poverty, misery and lack of freedom and opportunity of the people of Jammu and Kashmir state, I and my colleagues of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, many of whom are behind prison bars or in exile today, have humbly sought to serve them during the past sixteen years. We have endeavoured to give faithful expression to the growing consciousness among the people of their rights, aspirations and desire for freedom. This has attracted the penal and preventative provisions of law.

Where law is not based on the will of the people it can lead itself to the suppression of these aspirations. Such law has no moral validity even though it may be enforced for a while. There is a law higher than that, the law that represents the people's will and secures their well-being, and there is the tribunal of human conscience which judges the rulers and the ruled alike by standards which do not change by the arbitrary will of the most powerful. To that law I gladly submit and that tribunal I shall face with confidence and without fear, leaving it to history and posterity to pronounce their verdict on the claims I and my colleagues have made not merely on behalf of the four million people of Jammu and Kashmir, but also of the 93 million people of all the princes' states in India.

That claim has not been confined to a people of a particular race, or religion or colour. It applies to all. For I hold that humanity as a whole is indivisible by such barriers, and human rights must always prevail. The fundamental rights of all men and women to live and act as free human beings, to make laws and fashion their political, social and economic fabric, so that they may advance the cause of human freedom and progress, are inherent and cannot be denied, though they may be suppressed for a while.

Through past ages Kashmir has been famed throughout the world for its entrancing beauty, the peaceful and

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intellectual pursuits of its people and the skill of its craftsmen. Nature has bountifully endowed this land and placed it as a lovely crown on the brow of India. And yet this land of fable and romance and abounding resources continues to suffer in the grip of appalling squalor, poverty and misery, through starvation and want the bright eyes of the people have lost their lustre and their faces have become dull and lifeless.

When we who are of Kashmir look on this strange paradox, we are moved to our innermost depths and an overwhelming desire seizes us to do our utmost to change this unhappy scene and make of Kashmir what nature designed it to be. Moved by this grim reality, the National Conference of Jammu and Kashmir drew up a plan for the future government of Kashmir, in which it embodied a charter of the people's rights and obligations, a plan of democratically organised and responsible Government with a constitutional head and an economic structure of society, and called it "New Kashmir." It represents the fundamental rights and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and it is in full concordance with the demands and policies of the rest of India and the All-Indian States' Peoples Conference, of which I have the honour to be Vice-President. I have participated in the formation of the policy of the Conference, and I agree with it now, as I have done in the past.

This Conference has clearly laid down that the old treaties between the States and the British Government or with representatives are obsolete and must end. That applies to all treaties, including the treaty of Amritsar, which has some special and unhappy features, which make it a bond of sales deed of the territory and people of Kashmir. This treatment of a people as a commodity which can be transferred for hard-cash has all along been deeply resented by the Kashmiris, whether Hindu, Sikh or Muslim. It hurts their national dignity. In practice, the peculiar nature of the treaty of Amritsar has led to all kinds of discriminations against the Kashmiris, resulting in their treatment as some lower class.

In March last, as the culmination of many events, the British Prime Minister made the following announcement:—

> My colleagues are going to India with the intention of using their utmost endeavours to help her attain her freedom as speedily and fully as possible, what form of Government that is to replace the present regime is for India to decide; but our desire is to help her to set up forthwith the machinery for making that decision.
>
> I hope that India and her people may elect to remain within the British Commonwealth, I am certain that they will find great advantage in doing so.
>
> But if she does so elect, it must be by her own free will. The British Commonwealth and Empire is not bound together by chains of external compulsion, it is a free association of free peoples. If, on the other hand, she elects for independence, in our view she has a right to do so. It will be for us to help to make the transition as smooth and easy as possible.

This announcement affected the Indian States as well as the rest of India, and the people of the States felt that just as the people of India as a whole would decide their future, both internally and externally, so also they must have the right to determine their own future within the States and in relation to the larger framework of a free India.

It was clear that the old treaties between the King-Emperor and the States had to go. They represented something that had no relation to the modern world or to the India of today. They could not be reconciled with the inevitable changes in India and the States. It thus was clear to begin with, it became an accepted fact by the statement issued by the Cabinet delegation of May 16 last; that statement

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declared that paramountcy would go when the new constitution of free India came into being.

The future constitutional set-up in the State of Jammu and Kashmir cannot derive from the old source of relationship which was expiring and was bound to end soon. That set-up could only rest on the active will of the people of the State Conference; the title and authority of the head of the State could only be drawn from the true and abiding source of sovereignty, that is, the people. The ''Quit Kashmir'' cry symbolised and gave concrete shape to this demand for termination of a system of government which was in process of dissolution.

Meanwhile developments in Kashmir had led to a crisis. Certain constitutional changes were introduced in 1944 which were glaringly inadequate and fell far short of the demand of the situation. Yet we agreed to work them in order to expedite and facilitate further changes.

But our efforts ended in failure and these constitutional changes were reduced to a futile shadow. The intolerable privation and grievance of the people of Jammu and Kashmir found no relief or remedy. A microscopic minority of variously graded *Jagirdars** was, and is, allowed to exercise indefensible rights over large sections of the people, who live in appalling poverty. In Jammu province, especially in Chinani and Poonch, the Jagirdari system presents a pathetic spectacle of degrading poverty and heartless exploitation.

In recent years Kashmir province has been and is still being, parcelled out in Jagirs, which are granted to a small group of favourites. Thus when land reform is considered everywhere an essential preliminary to progress, in this State a semi-feudal land system is actually being extended with all its attendant evils.

The State has vast and rich natural resources, but these have failed to relieve poverty and utter want. Indeed, no effort is being made to develop these resources, for the common good, and in a changing world Kashmir continues static and unchanging, and steeped in misery. This can only be due to the failure of human agency and the autocratic system of administration. It can only be remedied by the representatives of the people undertaking the tasks of planning and development for the betterment of the masses.

The percentage of literacy in the State is six, the percentage of higher education is one and the average income *per capita* is 11 rupees per annum. This by itself is an eloquent commentary on the system and structure of government to which the slogan of ''Quit Kashmir'' is addressed.

Yet the real policy of successive premiers has been to crush the popular movement as represented by the National Conference, presumably because this great organisation was the strongest and the loudest in voicing the people's demands for political and economic change.

We have the authority of the present premier himself for the statement that he started this policy immediately after taking office. To a newspaper correspondent he stated soon after May 20: ''We have been preparing for it for eleven months and now we are ready to meet the challenge, there will be no more vacillation and no weak-kneed policy. We shall be ruthlessly firm and we make no apology about it.''

Strangely enough, the premier had the clairvoyance to prepare for the effect of my speeches eleven months before they were delivered or ''Quit Kashmir'' was heard as a slogan. Even before these speeches, elaborate military preparations were made all over

* ''Jagir'' is a grant of land made by a Maharaja; a ''Jagirdar'' is the recipient of such a grant, i.e., a landowner.

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the valley, and, again on the premier's authority, three units of the army were flown to Kashmir. There was much planning ahead. The Governor of Kashmir has stated "We planned ahead with the aid of the police and military. The combined operations of the two alone could save the situation. The fusion has worked well and yielded good results. My faith in stern measures before the trouble spread has been justified."

It is this eleven months' preparation and all that went with it that are the direct cause of the happenings since May 20, not a few speeches or some slogans shouted by a crowd. It is an ironical irrelevance to discuss the merits or demerits of a speech and to ignore the patent and admitted actions of the Kashmir State administration which inevitably led, and were meant to lead, to recent events.

The climax of the prime minister's "ruthlessness" was reached after May 20, when men and women were dishonoured, human beings were made to crawl or hop on one leg on the roads and sweep them with their turbans, places of worship were desecrated and an attempt was made to terrorise our whole people by methods of frightfulness. Eleven months' preparations for the premier's ruthlessness and all the careful thought that had gone towards co-ordination of the military and police, had borne fruit.

Some allegations have been made that the "Quit Kashmir" slogan and the demands for the abrogation of the treaty of Amritsar had communal or Communist inspiration. This is a travesty of fact and I deny and repudiate these allegations. The National Conference is essentially a national organisation including in its fold all people who agree with its objectives, and it co-operates with the All-Indian People's States Conference with which it is affiliated. It stands in the All India context for the independence and freedom of India. It stands also for social and economic changes to end privilege and raise the masses.

It is a small matter whether I am imprisoned and tried and convicted, but it is no small matter that the people of Jammu and Kashmir suffer poverty, humiliation and degradation. It has been no small matter what they have endured during the violent repression of the past two months or more and what they are enduring now. The very events have demonstrated the justice of our demands, and our cry "Quit Kashmir." For a system of government that can subsist only by pursuing such methods stands condemned. If my imprisonment and that of my colleagues serves the cause to which we have dedicated ourselves, then it will be well with us and we shall have happiness in thus serving our people and the land of our forefathers.

Kashmir is dear to us because of its beauty and its past traditions, which are common to all who inhabit this land, but it is the future that calls to us and for which we labour, a future that will become the heritage of all and in which we, as free men and women, linked organically with the rest of India, will build the New Kashmir of our dreams. Then only shall we be worthy of the land we dwell in.

CORRECTION

In James Klugmann's article on the New Jugoslavia in the September number on pages 273 and 276 the words "Croat-Serb reaction" should read "Great-Serb reaction."

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America's "Large Policy"

by ARTHUR CLEGG

WHEN, under President McKinley, the United States was preparing for war against Spain to seize the Philippines and Cuba, Senator Lodge wrote to his friend Theodore Roosevelt that he believed that the President was now won over to "the large policy which we both desire."

This "large policy" has been a constant dream in American imperialist circles since the days of Commodore Perry, one of its earliest advocates; and its exponents have been most frequently, though by no means solely, found in the Navy Department and the Republican Party.

As one would expect, the founders of the policy often put matters a little more bluntly than do its holders today. Admiral Du Pont, of the Hawaii Squadron, declared in 1851, for example, that "the Hawaiian Islands would prove the most important acquisition we could make in the whole Pacific Ocean—an acquisition intimately connected with our commercial and naval supremacy in those seas." Nowadays, following the fashion set by President Truman earlier this year, it is customary to talk of the United States "assuming world leadership" rather than of "commercial and naval supremacy," but the essential similarity of intent is fairly obvious.

Commodore Perry was also forthright on the question of bases as part of the "large policy." "We cannot," said Perry, "expect to be free from the ambitious longings of increased power, which are the natural concomitants of national success." And, pointing to the way in which "our great maritime rival, England" was increasing the number of its "fortified places," Perry urged, "No time should be lost adopting active measures to secure a sufficient number of ports of refuge." So saying, the gallant Commodore seized the Bonin islands on his own initiative to provide such a "port of refuge" lying near to China and Japan.

If Perry in his day was unable to carry Congress all the way in his plans, the spokesmen of the policy are plentifully vociferous in Congress now. A year ago the House of Representatives Naval Affairs Committee brought out a plan to establish U.S. military, naval and air bases in almost every country and territory in the Pacific area, north, south, east and west; while six members of the House of Representatives Military Affairs Committee who have been touring the Pacific area and dining and wining with General MacArthur, have recently returned to the United States with the message, as reported by the *Daily Telegraph* (September 2nd, 1946) that a strong, mobile U.S. force must be stationed in the Pacific "to meet the threat of Russian encroachment there and 'the imminent danger of another Pearl Harbour in Korea and Alaska.'"

The "we are menaced cry" has, for one hundred years, been the favourite device of spokesmen of the "large policy" to cover their desires for "naval and commercial supremacy." It was used, for example, not only by Perry but also by President Harding who, coming to the presidency in 1920 on a wave of isolationist feeling, declared, "the Pacific has its menaces and they deeply concern us. Our territorial interests are larger there. Its waters are not strange to us, its further shores are not unknown to our citizens." Harding, of course, was a prominent advocate of the "open door" and "equality of opportunity" and the "Pacific menaces" were helpful in

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the campaign to secure the writing of those principles into the Nine Power Treaty of 1922. Is it then surprising that when Secretary Byrnes sings at Paris to the same tune of "equality" the rest of the world is by no means impressed?

Since it is sometimes omitted from the record, it is perhaps worth mentioning in connection with Harding that "Isolationism" in the United States as set out by its leaders was never isolation from the Pacific or Latin America, but only from Europe. And prominent isolationist Republicans of recent times have seldom, at some stage in their career, failed to pay tribute to Webster, Perry, Seward, McKinley and similar prominent Republicans who have been advocates of "largeness."

But, at the same time, one cannot forget the Democratic Party. After all, it was Democratic President Van Buren who first ordered a U.S. naval squadron to serve in Chinese waters, even if he had not the temerity to order them to sail up the Yangzte as the U.S. navy is doing today. And it was Democratic President Cleveland who finally prepared the ground for the annexation of Hawaii.

Nor does the presence of missionaries as Ambassadors in China necessarily afford any protection to eastern peoples from the advocates of "the large policy." It is less than ninety years ago since Dr. Peter Parker, first missionary to be appointed U.S. Minister to China, busy on the promotion of American trade with Formosa, decided that it would be simplest to seize the port of Takow as a naval base and, running up the Stars and Stripes, with a U.S. naval officer to keep it flying, he wrote to the State Department urging annexation and hoping that "the government of the United States may not shrink from the action which the interests of humanity, civilisation, navigation and commonsense impose upon it in relation to Taiwan (Formosa)." Nor can it be forgotten that, when the war with Spain was on, President McKinley, as he confessed to journalists, spent a whole night in prayer before he saw the light and was guided to annex the Philippines for the betterment of their inhabitants.

Such then, in brief, are the aims and propaganda techniques of "the large policy" as practised both formerly and today. Should anyone still question the connection at the moment between present U.S. policies in the Pacific and the aim of "world leadership," then the ghost of Seward, Secretary of State under and rival of Lincoln, will answer that the United States must command the empire of the seas and that the Pacific will become the chief theatre of world events.

Of course "the large policy" has never lacked opponents even within the United States. McKinley was opposed by sections of Republicans who remained true to the Lincoln tradition. And, on being told of the annexation of Hawaii, one Democratic Congressman remarked that if when the United States had a population of only three millions, these rocky, volcanic islands were not important to its defence he failed to see why, when the population had risen to seventy million, they were considered so vital. Even today many Americans are not quite so pleased, say, with General MacArthur, as the General appears to be with himself. Senator Pepper, for example, with Japan as well as Greece in mind, has charged that American armed forces have become the "symbols of royalty and reaction." And Henry Wallace has written that "We are by far the most powerful nation of the world. Any talk on our part about the need for strengthening of our defences further is bound to appear hypocritical to other nations."

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But, while opponents of forward policy in the Pacific have never been lacking, the issues have never been so forcibly posed as today. Essentially, only two positions are possible. Either the solution of eastern and Pacific problems is worked out in a United Nations way, that is, primarily, by U.S.A.-U.S.S.R. co-operation (since those are the two chief powers in the Far East and Pacific today), or the United States follows unilateral policies to achieve its own domination over the whole area as Japan sought and failed to do. From this standpoint one can see clearly how fatal have been the policies of MacArthur, not merely in relation to his protection of Japanese reaction, but in his opposition to the formation of the Allied Council for Japan and the Far East Commission by the Moscow Conference of December, 1945, and his sabotage of that machinery since. From the available evidence it is clear that MacArthur cares nothing for the United Nations, he desires only to establish a larger American empire. Though a general, he is evidently a pupil of Perry, and, as a leading Republican, he evidently clings to the Party's dowdiest traditions.

MacArthur cares as little for the opinions of the British Government as for those of the Soviet Union. Both British and Soviet plans of land reform have been flatly rejected, and the trade union proposals of both have been scorned. Units of the Japanese whaling fleet, claimed as reparations by Britain and Norway to make up wartime losses, have been handed over by MacArthur to the Japanese Government so that the Japanese can be first in the revival of the whaling industry. U.S. unilateralism is ruthless.

On the defeat of Japan, American advocates of a forward policy in the Pacific were conscious of a unique opportunity. Japan was out of the picture. Britain had her hands full reconquering south-east Asia. China was in the throes of civil war, since Chiang Kai-shek did not even wait for the defeat of Japan before launching attacks on the democratic areas. This last provided a double gain, since it ensured that China would be unable to maintain a policy on any question of importance and also gave possibilities of charging a high price for aid to Chinese reactionaries.

An additional opportunity was provided by the wide sweep of U.S. armies which ended the war in occupation of Japan (MacArthur), southern Korea (Hodge) and the former Japanese mandated Pacific islands where U.S. occupation was, and is, complete; and the presence of U.S. forces in China (some 75,000 in the spring of this year under General Weydemeyer) and in the Philippines (there were 90,000 there even after the declaration of "independence"). The U.S. army is much more open about the business connections of high officers than is customary in other capitalist armies. The position of MacArthur, who is a big businessman in the Philippines, is by no means unique.

No sooner was Japan defeated than there came news of big business deals, of options on the raw material reserves of Korea, of land purchases by generals in the Philippines, etc. Recently the Tokyo correspondent of the *Wall Street Journal* wrote that there were some 5,000 Americans in Japan trying to capture a dominant position in the sphere of trade and investment and that the occupation authorities "were preparing the ground for American businessmen." The *Journal* also pointed out that under the State Department's scheme for the dissolution of the big Japanese trusts (only some three or four of the largest are to be dissolved) the shares will be sold on the open market and thus provided excellent opportunity for U.S. pur-

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chases. The same method is proposed for South Korea.

Finally, the policy was facilitated by the Anglo-American understanding reached in 1945 that while south-east Asia was largely a British concern, the Pacific and China were largely American. The division of command between MacArthur and Mountbatten made the military understanding obvious, but the relative silence in which MacArthur has been allowed to brush aside British interests, e.g., the whaling ships episode and the claims for food for Japan which should have gone to India imply an understanding deeper than military. Indeed, one leading British politician, in defiance of history, has handed the whole Far East lock, stock and barrel to U.S.A. Churchill, in a speech at a New York banquet immediately after Fulton, declared, "Japan was overthrown almost entirely by American arms," which is the main point of the MacArthur-Hodge-Weydemeyer creed and ignores the eight-year struggle of China and the Soviet, British, Australian, Indian and other contributions to Japan's overthrow.

Thus one can see why the standard bearers of "the large policy" press forward so strongly and why they are so concerned to whip up antagonism to the Soviet Union, which is the only Power at the moment willing to defend policies in the interests of peace and of the Pacific and Far Eastern peoples; and why the "menace" of the Soviet Union is featured so prominently, since the advocates of the policy must have a "menace" to justify it and the old ones of Britain and Japan don't cut much ice at present.

But there are difficulties ahead.

In the first place, whatever was agreed in 1945, U.S. capital knows no bounds and is already endeavouring to secure oil concessions from the Dutch in Sumatra and a foothold in India. Nor does British capital know any bounds. The days are past when an industry confined to Britain can dominate the Far East, so British monopolies make deals with Indian business men and establish factories in Australia for the coming Anglo-American trade war. U.S. capital, which had first marked out Sino-American companies as the best bet for Pacific trade, has had its enthusiasm cooled by the protracted civil war and now turns increasingly to Japanese-American arrangements.

In the second place, there are the Far Eastern and Pacific peoples. U.S. arms have secured the imposition of reactionary governments on the Japanese and Filipinos, with arms and finance similar attempts are being made in China and Korea. To back up these and similar policies elsewhere and overawe the peoples, the Bikini atom bomb tests were staged (why Bikini? Just to show the Pacific was an American lake?). When they fell a bit flat generals were found to speak of even more terrible bombs to come and so on.

But the peoples of the Pacific and Far East have in recent years made history in the anti-Japanese resistance movement, they will not be intimidated and they intend to go on making history, as events in China show. The cause of these peoples, of the United Nations, will triumph, and the present advocates of "the large policy" will pass into history with even less glory than that of their predecessors.

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Travel Notes No. 5

by R. PALME DUTT

July 4.

A short visit to Ahmedabad. The communal tension is still grave, following the riots, in the first two days of which 33 were reported killed and 250 injured, with the military firing twice. This is part of the predicted fruits of the Cabinet Mission's work, whose ceaseless balancing and counterposing of Hindus and Moslems in the constitutional machinery and proposed Interim Government has inevitably inflamed Hindu-Moslem antagonism. Gandhi has proposed that the Congress Home Minister, Desai, should place himself in the midst of the warring crowds and sacrifice his life, and that this would have a good effect. Desai did not share this view and came under full police and military protection to set up a not very effective Peace Preservation Committee. A twenty-four hours' curfew was at first imposed, which paralysed the city, preventing even the buying of rations, so that some relaxation became necessary. It is to be feared that communal conflict will increase, as the result of the British Plan unfold themselves.

July 5.

In Delhi once again, I was able to pick up the latest gossip about the negotiations and the breakdown of the Interim Government plan. The Cabinet Mission were wise to depart on June 29, before everything came unstuck. It is reported that Jinnah, infuriated at what he regards as the breach of faith through the refusal to go forward with a League Interim Government after the Congress rejection, said to his lieutenants: "One thing is clear—the British are not gentlemen." It seemed a trifle late in the day for an elderly Indian politician of over seventy to make this discovery.

July 6-15.

Lahore. At last I have been able to make my thrice postponed visit to the Punjab. Even so, an error of the air company in giving me the time of departure lost me my plane; and I was so infuriated at having thus unwillingly to disappoint a fourth time Punjab comrades waiting for the reception that I compelled the air company to charter me a special plane at their own expense. The special plane from Delhi to Lahore, with only the pilot and myself, was a pleasant journey; the pilot was most friendly; as we left Delhi, he said: "By the by, have you seen the Red Fort from above? No? It's worth seeing; I'll take you over it." Then a bit later: "Feeling too hot? All right, we'll go up a thousand feet, till it's better." Of course the inevitable talk on the Cabinet Mission plan: full scepticism, as usual, of British intentions, and considerable weariness with the feuds of the Indian top politicians.

The Punjab is the strongest base of the Moslem League and also the homeland of the Sikhs. I was able to learn much of both sections. The mosque on Friday is the gathering ground of all Moslems in the locality, rich and poor together in formal equality, where their sense of solidarity is strongly forged. In the narrow (often barely a yard or two yards wide) crowded streets of the Old City of Lahore, slum-ridden and disease-infested, I was able to enter into Moslem homes and was even privileged to enter behind the purdah or wicker screen rigorously guarding the women's quarter of the house. In this last case we were received by a Moslem woman comrade who had only recently become a party member: she was still in strict purdah and though she received me unveiled, held her eyes downcast on the ground all

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the time we spoke. Her story had not been a happy one; she had been married to a husband who was a drunkard and beat her, and had run away from him back to her father's house; for this crime she had met with the opprobrium of the whole neighbourhood. Then she had become drawn into the women's work conducted by the local group of the Indian Women's Movement, with party participation (I was happy to learn that at any rate in the Indian Women's Movement Congress and Communist and Moslem women co-operate and have so far resisted all attempts at splitting), helping mothers and babies and maternity and rent cases and sickness and had become beloved by the neighbourhood. It was she who took us round to different homes, but first before going out she had to cover herself in black from head to foot.

The position of women in the vast majority of orthodox homes, both Moslem and Hindu, is still very restricted. This is especially visible in the Punjab and the Central Provinces (in Bombay emancipation has gone much further). In Lahore, even in well-to-do middle class circles only a few years age for a husband and wife to be seen driving together in an open victoria was considered highly shocking. Engaged couples are not allowed to meet until marriage; the wife has to learn to love the husband after marriage. Nevertheless, I have seen in many Indian households the deepest, tenderest affection between husband and wife. But so far from there being any opportunity for courting, for a young man even to see his bride before they are properly married would appear to be felt as a much greater outrage against decency and morality by the orthodox in strict Indian households than the Western European or American orthodox today seem to feel over the new habits of the younger generation in the West to take a trial trip together before marriage.

The Punjab is the traditional home of many famous old revolutionary movements, such as the Ghadr, the Hijrat, the Akalis, etc. All the foremost representatives of these movements, including men with thirty-three year prison records, former Congress provincial secretaries, etc., have now united in the Communist Party, so that the Punjab Communist Party may truly be said to gather up all the great national revolutionary traditions of the Punjab. The Punjab Communist Party differs in character from all other regions of the Party, with its bearded elders on its leading committees and its predominantly middle peasant basis.

The Punjab is a land of big landlords. Two thousand six hundred big landlords own 38 per cent. of the land and constitute the main base of the British - supported Unionist Party, which for so many years has formed the Government. The canal system, with the heavy dues exacted for water, returned 17 per cent. on the invested capital today as against 4 per cent. in 1887. It is a land of intensive police rule, with a greater proportionate expenditure on police than any other province. In the elections the Moslem League, in which left wing influence is strong in the Punjab, swept the board with 75 seats as against 1 in 1937, driving down the Unionists from 96 to 20; the Congress has 51 and the Panthic Akalis (Sikhs) 22. But the Congress joined with the hated Unionists to form a coalition Ministry and keep out the League. Lahore was the only big city in India where I found I could not hold a public meeting. The Congress-Unionist Ministry had prohibited all public gatherings of over five persons.

Nevertheless, I was able to address privately invited meetings and also to attend the foundation delegate conference of the North Western Railway Union. Hitherto working-class organisation in the Punjab has been weak.

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There are 130,000 workers on the N.W. Railway; but the traditional existing union had been in corrupt reactionary hands, so that, when it came to an election for the Legislative Assembly from this Labour constituency only 1,800 electors were returned, half of these were undiscoverable, and the remaining votes commanded 250 to 400 rupees (£20 to £30) apiece. Now, however, a change had come. When the All-India railway strike ballot was taken in spring, and the Punjab organisers refused to hold the ballot, the militant workers called a one day token strike on May 1 as the equivalent of a ballot. Seventy thousand workers responded. Many tales were told of this strike. On one occasion the workers had thrown themselves on the lines to stop a train. Armed police threatened to fire on them. But R.I.N. men were on the train and stepped off to enquire what was the trouble. When they learned, they said to the police, "If you fire, we fire," and the police had to retreat. The meeting was full of enthusiasm, and the North-West Railway Union now has 20,000 members.

Unfortunately, while In Lahore I went down with an attack of malaria. It was not an enjoyable experience to have a temperature which would not drop below 102 for a series of successive days and nights in the midst of an exceptionally fierce heat-wave in which people were dropping dead in the streets from the heat. But the patience and care with which the comrades nursed me was beyond praise and in a few days I was well again and able to hold a postponed press conference.

July 16-23.

My plane priority to England was already fixed for July 31; but I was able to work in one final week in the Indian State of Kashmir before departing. I attached very great importance to visiting Kashmir before leaving India, not only to see the fabled beauty of a land where the bounty of Nature is in such contrast to the cruelty of man and the ragged poverty of the people, but also because Kashmir is today the political storm-centre of the Indian fight for freedom.

Kashmir is the largest Indian State in area. Its strategic importance is great, since it borders the Soviet Union and China. On its northernmost uplands the few scattered peasants can see from their land of poverty only a few miles across the mountains the smoking factory chimneys and prosperity of their brothers of Tajikistan. Small wonder that the British are concerned to maintain their iron curtain against the dread example of Socialism. In recent years the northern district of Gilgit has been detached and brought under direct British military occupation and control.

Feudal oppression in Kashmir is terrible, intensified by the police rule of corrupt and incompetent despotism. A Calcutta friend related to me how his great-uncle had been called to become Prime Minister of Kashmir in 1875. Horrified at the unlimited exactions and oppression by the great nobles, he had protested to the then Maharajah and urged reform. The Maharajah had replied: "Why worry? Let the grapes swell; we shall get the juice." Today little is changed. The present Maharajah is Sir Hari Singh, well-known to the European public as "Mr. A." He squanders the taxes extracted from his people on building palaces and breeding racehorses. There is scarcely the barest educational or health provision. I saw the National Hospital, where a small band of devoted doctors have struggled to build up some service under the most primitive conditions; they showed me with pride the instruments which they had had to instruct local blacksmiths to prepare for them for the most delicate surgical operations. The total State subvention to this hospital was £115 a

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year; and even this has now been withdrawn, after the National Hospital had dared to serve the victims of the May shooting. The poverty of the people in this land of unexampled resources and bounteous fertility of its valleys exceeds any poverty of the rest of India. The income of the people is estimated by the People's Conference at ½d. per head per day. The tourists in the spring and summer see the beautiful lakes, the fertile fields, the smiling orchards and flowers and fruit of the Happy Valley. They do not concern themselves with the stinking huts in which the people live. In the snow and ice of winter the peasants go ragged and barefoot.

Yet the people's movement of Kashmir is the strongest and most militant of any Indian State. The Kashmir People's Conference (former Moslem Conference) unites the Moslem majority and Hindu minority in a common national movement of the Kashmiri people. Its leader, Sheikh Abdulla, impressed me as one of the most honest, courageous and able political leaders I had the pleasure of seeing in India. A rugged six foot four figure, simple, dignified and fearless before authority, he is idolised by the people; at the mere mention of his name every eye lights up. When Sheikh Abdulla and the People's Conference launched in May their "Quit Kashmir" campaign against the Maharajah, challenging the sanctity of the Treaty of Amritsar by which a century ago the Kashmir people had been sold in bondage to the Dogra dynasty by the East India Company for half a million pounds, and demanding that the Dogra House must go and princely rule end, the British authorities understood very well the significance of that challenge. The whole British Plan for continued domination in India turns on the Princes and the Indian States as the pivot. If once the Kashmir people should drive out the Maharajah, and if the example were to sweep through every State of India, the whole British Plan for continued domination would be torpedoed. The British authorities understood well enough the significance of the issue, even if the Congress leadership, horrified at such an uncompromising democratic challenge and full of elaborate clever plans to win over the Princes, did not. Terror was let loose in Kashmir.

Sheikh Abdulla had invited me to Kashmir in the beginning of May, but the Simla Conference had prevented me. His last letter to me on May 17 had said that "conditions here are unsettled" and that it was necessary to be prepared for "any untoward eventuality." On May 20 Sheikh Abdulla and some three hundred leaders of the People's Conference were arrested; the people, men, women and children, were shot down and numbers killed; even Nehru, coming later to Kashmir, was placed under arrest. All this could not happen in an Indian State without the approval and control of the Viceroy and the Political Department.

At last in July I was able to come to Kashmir. The close on two hundred miles from Rawalpindi to Srinagar along the Jhelum Valley road are traversed by car (there are no trains in Kashmir). Over the bonnet of our car proudly waved the red flag with the hammer and sickle; every eye turned to look at it, for it closely resembled the emblem of the People's Conference, the Red Flag with the plough.

Before getting down to business, three days in the tonic mountain air and sun of Gulmarg, eight and a half thousand feet above sea level, helped to restore my strength after the effects of malaria. The last part of the journey to Gulmarg is made on horseback. I had certainly never expected to find myself on the back of a horse, but necessity knows no law. When the car came to a stop twenty miles out of Srinagar, I was coolly informed: "The rest of the journey is on horse-

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back," and there were the horses saddled and ready. However, these wise trained animals, used to carrying fools at a walking pace, and knowing their way over the mountains blindfold, were so kind and tolerant that even a booby could not fall off; and I was presently able to admire the scenery freely even when the path wound along with a height on one side and a deep descent on the other. Later, I made the ascent on horseback to Khellan Marg, 11,000 feet high, from which one can see the frozen lake and the heights of the Himalayas, with the peak of Nanga Parbat, 29,000 feet high.

Returned to Srinagar, I was able to meet various people and get some picture of the situation. I met the leaders of the popular movement, now underground. I was present at the opening of the trial of Sheikh Abdulla, and although permission to visit him was refused to me, I was able in practice to have four conversations with him during the proceedings. I had a three hours' interview with the Governor of Srinagar, who is also the District Magistrate and responsible for law and order. Premier Kak, after many delays of the arrangements for a promised interview, finally pleaded illness. The British Resident, after many similar delays, finally refused point-blank to see me, on the grounds that he had previously seen Norman Cliff of the *News-Chronicle* (who had already given me a very interesting and revealing account of the interview). and that he did not like what Cliff had written and had accordingly decided to see no more press representatives. It was evident that he did not relish any enquiry into his proceedings.

I was able to see in Srinagar the scenes of the reign of terror that had been established. I saw the bullet-ridden walls of the Khanqua-i-Mohalla mosque outside which the main firing had taken place on May 21. The compound of the mosque, where some 5,000 people were gathered on that day is an enclosed space from which there was no possible escape for the crowd under fire. I visited in hospital surviving victims of the firing with terrible gunshot wounds right through their bodies (one was a boy of twelve; the bullet had passed through his breast next the heart). I saw armed sentries posted on all the bridges and strategic points. An Indian journalist who accompanied me to Srinagar was subjected to a police raid at night by ten C.I.D. men, who made a complete search of his room, as well as of the room of Freda Bedi in the same hotel. The driver of the car which I had used in Srinagar was, I learned subsequently, arrested and beaten up to extract from him information as to my movements. I was able to hear first-hand accounts of the terrible outrages which were still going on, especially in Bhadgam and Islamabad. Despite the terror, there could be no question of the unbreakable spirit and determination of the people. The red flags with the plough were to be seen on all sides on the houses in Srinagar.

In the trial proceedings the public were kept half a mile away from the court by armed guards who prevented approach except for those with a pass personally signed by the judge. Nevertheless, the sympathy even among the soldiers and armed guards for Abdullah was visible. When Abdulla entered the court, the entire court with the exception of the judge stood up in his honour—which was more than they had done for the judge. He saw me as he entered and moved away from his guards to shake me by the hand, and we exchanged greetings and I was able publicly to express to him the admiration and support felt for his stand. The proceedings were held up till we had completed these greetings. This courageous action on his part thus made possible a public demon-

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stration of the solidarity of the freedom movement in Kashmir and the movement outside.

The Governor of Srinagar, in his interview with me, made no concealment of his hostility to democracy. He took full responsibility for the arrest of Abdullah and for all the military measures. He refused to answer the question whether it was a crime to express the view that the form of State should be changed from princely rule to popular sovereignty. He sought to argue that the speeches of Abdullah from May 9 to 16 were equivalent to an incitement to violence, and that this was proved by the disturbances of May 21-25. Nevertheless, he admitted that there had been no violence or sabotage of any kind until after the arrests on May 20. With regard to the firing, he stuck to the official maximum figure of eight or nine killed, but at one point let drop the significant aside: "I would not care if more had been killed." He vehemently opposed any suggestion of an independent enquiry, declaring that this would be an interference with the sovereignty of Kashmir.

I further questioned him sharply on the stories of Russian influence and Russian agents in Kashmir. He admitted that he had no evidence whatever for any such stories. Subsequently, I saw the editor of the *Kashmir Times*, which had been publishing these stories and demanded of him to present his evidence. He declared that he had no evidence to produce for a court of law, but that it was "common talk." He said that it was known that Russians in disguise had crossed the border and come into Srinagar. I demanded that he should produce for me a single case to substantiate this and he admitted that he could not produce any. He finally declared, as his only defence, that the stories had come "from London." I expressed to him my opinion that it was absolutely shameless and irresponsible action on his part to publish these stories without any foundation whatever and that it was his duty to publish an immediate withdrawal. This interview took place in the court in the presence of other journalists and I was told that the account of it was all over Srinagar the next morning.

July 24.

On my return to Rawalpindi I was able to meet Nehru at the aerodrome on his way to Srinagar and have a last interview with him. I was very concerned to report to him my impression of the situation, that Sheikh Abdullah and the people stood absolutely firm behind the slogan "Quit Kashmir," that it would be out of the question to suggest to them to withdraw from the political stand they had taken up, and that it was of the greatest importance in the interests of the Congress and the whole Indian movement to give them the fullest possible backing. I indicated the harm which had been done by Asaf Ali's interview during his visit to Kashmir, in which he had declared that the "'Quit Kashmir' slogan was a cry of despair" and that "the slogan 'Quit Kashmir' has no significance other than the rectification of an untenable position and the establishment of a sound constitutional relationship between a constitutional monarch and the people from whom he should derive title and power." This interview with its complete misrepresentation of the meaning of the "Quit Kashmir" slogan had been published with great prominence in the current issue of the *Kashmir Times* which came out while I was there.

At the conclusion of this interview I felt some concern that Nehru appeared to be going to Kashmir with a similar line, and that the Congress might pursue the suicidal policy of letting down the Kashmir fight and setting itself to save the Princes, thus playing straight into the hands of British policy. (*Cont. on p. iv of cover*)

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TRAVEL NOTES (*cont. from p.* 324).

July 25-29.

A final visit to Bombay gave me the opportunity to say farewell to many friends, hold a last press conference and participate in a last public meeting, a magnificently organised "Salute Kashmir" demonstration, for which the I.P.T.A. central troupe had prepared in three days a moving and impressive Ballet of Kashmir. The last item of this demonstration was a very popular and loudly applauded song, addressed to the English in India with the refrain "Go Back to London," with a whole series of variations on the theme "Why make five hundred excuses? Go back to London." Next morning, I had a final meeting with the Central Committee of the Communist Party which was in session, and took the opportunity to express to them my appreciation of the previous evening's splendid demonstration as an inspiring final memory and added that I had especially appreciated the delicate hint of the farewell song, "Go back to London," which I would faithfully obey. And I did.

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